



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

For Advance Release

TUESDAY A. M., FEBRUARY 29, 1944.

Although comparatively few people have ever heard its name, the New England rosefish is now giving stiff competition to the haddock for leading place in the fresh fish markets of the country, both having replaced the "sacred cod" of wider fame, the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries reported today.

The catch of rosefish is now actually larger than that of haddock - 115,000,000 pounds in 1943 compared with 100,000,000 pounds of haddock - but because the haddock contains less waste the total quantity of food provided by this fish is still somewhat greater than that furnished by the rosefish.

Only ten years ago the rosefish ranked 130th on a list of U. S. fishes arranged according to the volume of production but it is now taken in larger quantity than any other fish in New England. In the country as a whole, it is outranked by only six species of fish, but these are of principal importance in the canning and byproducts industries, rather than in the fresh fish trade.

Haddock had been the leading New England fish for about the past 20 years; before that the cod, universally considered symbolic of the New England fisheries, had held first place from colonial days.

The swift rise of the rosefish from a yield of about 264,000 pounds in 1933 to its peak production of 145,000,000 in 1941 was due to the adaptation of this species to the comparatively new filleting process, in which slices of firm meat, minus bones and waste, are cut from the sides of the fish and packaged. Although fishermen had formerly thrown rosefish away because they had no market for it, an almost unlimited market for the filleted product developed and catches grew accordingly.

The entire U. S. catch of rosefish is taken off the coast of New England and Nova Scotia and is landed at Gloucester, Boston, Portland, and Rockland. Of the four ports, Gloucester receives the largest quantities of rosefish; Boston the least. In 1943, Gloucester received 73 percent of all rosefish caught, or nearly 84,000,000 pounds. Rockland followed with 13,500,000 pounds, while Portland received 12,250,000 and Boston 5,000,000.

Fishermen have preferred to land rosefish at the smaller ports because they are nearer the fishing grounds and good facilities for handling the catches have been provided there.

In life, the rosefish is a handsome reddish color and has large black eyes, but since the entire catch is filleted the public has had no opportunity to become familiar with its appearance. Because most people buy fish fillets without asking their identity, millions are now eating rosefish without being aware of the fact.